



# The Terracotta Army: The History of Ancient China's Famous Terracotta Warriors and Horses

*Charles River Editors*

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\*Includes pictures

\*Includes ancient accounts of the emperor's reign and description of his tomb

\*Describes how the Terracotta Army was designed and created

\*Includes a bibliography for further reading

“The terracotta army was a one-off creation, original in both concept and execution, unmentioned in any source, no sooner buried than destroyed and forgotten. ... Why so realistic? Why this many? Why full-size? Why clay? ... The initial inspiration was the need to duplicate a new force, of which the main element was infantry, conscripted from the emperor’s newly acquired masses of peasants, and protected not with custom-made armor but with scales of leather and simple, standardized weapons. It was the combination of archers, infantry and charioteers, this particular balance between officers and men, that had enabled the First Emperor to unify the nation.” - John Man, *The Terracotta Army: China's First Emperor and the Birth of a Nation*

China has always fascinated outsiders, much in the same way that distant light fascinates someone looking down a dark road. It is both familiar and mysterious, ancient and new, and fully understanding it seems to always remain just out of reach. From the Great Wall to the ancient teachings of Confucius, China’s natural and man-made wonders have been topics of interest among Westerners since the Middle Ages and the pursuit of trade routes both by land and sea, amazing Marco Polo and 19th century British expeditions in similar ways despite the passage of several centuries between them.

For these reasons, it comes as little surprise that people across the world were excited when it was revealed in 1974 that archaeologists had uncovered a new and amazing find: an underground army consisting of thousands of clay soldiers, still standing at their posts despite being over 2,000 years old. In addition to the remarkable feats of craftsmanship and the almost unimaginable size and scale of the Terracotta Army, the sculpted statues seemed to bear testimony of something that modern people could not quite wrap their minds around, representing a time when China was born almost 200 years before Christ. The hope for many was that this remarkable army could reveal the secrets of China’s first emperor, Qin Shi Huang, a man who united seven warring tribes into one of the most powerful nations on earth.

Even as research continues 40 years after the initial find, some of the facts about the Terracotta Army are staggering. It’s estimated that the army consists of 8,000 soldiers, 130 chariots, and hundreds of horses and cavalry, all of which were sculpted on a mass scale by various factories but were subsequently molded to feature their own unique appearances separate of one another. As if that wasn’t enough, there are also terracotta sculptures of acrobats, servants, and musicians, and the sculptures were painted (though most of the paint has faded away over time). This impressive horde of funerary art was buried with Qin Shi Huang to serve him in the afterlife, much the same way Egyptian pyramids were constructed for pharaohs.

While the sculptures comprising the Terracotta Army are impressive as a work of art, they have indeed proven to be an invaluable historical source as well. Thanks to collections of weapons buried with the sculptures, as well as the shapes and sizes of the various military equipment, historians can get a sense of what Qin Shi Huang had at his disposal when he fought battles, and the Terracotta Army itself is even

organized based on military rank, allowing historians a chance to understand ancient Chinese military formations.

The Terracotta Army: The History of Ancient China's Famous Terracotta Warriors and Horses chronicles the history of the Chinese emperor who commissioned them and a description of the famous funerary art. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the Terracotta Army like never before.

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